Introducing the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association

West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association
Supporting the social and emotional well-being of children
What it is not!

“I wish I’d started therapy at your age.”
What is Infant Toddler Mental Health?

Infant toddler mental health is the developing capacity of the child from birth to three to:

- Experience, regulate, and express *emotions*;
- Form close and secure interpersonal *relationships*;
- And *explore* the environment and learn all in the context of family, community, and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development.

Zero to Three, the National Center on Infants and Toddlers, 2001
Keep this in mind to help every baby have good infant mental health

The birth of a baby offers the hopefulness of a new relationship and the promise for growth and change

-Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, mi-aimh.org
Keep this in mind to help every baby have good infant mental health

Babies have something to say…it is up to the adults in their world to learn the language.

-Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, mi-aimh.org
Babies remember their earliest relationship experiences. These experiences become the prototypes for future relationships, influencing their trust of themselves, others, and the world.

-Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, mi-aimh.org
Babies are active partners in each relationship. They bring their own personalities, unique strengths, and vulnerabilities, to the relationship.

-Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, mi-aimh.org
Keep this in mind to help every baby have good infant mental health

Babies need to be attended to, even when parents are overburdened.

-Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, mi-aimh.org
Keep this in mind to help every baby have good infant mental health

The baby is the window to the soul—into the past and present—and into the awakening sense of joy and promise in a new life.

-Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health, mi-aimh.org
History

- Efforts have been ongoing in West Virginia to improve Infant Mental Health since 1995

- In 2000, the Early Childhood Mental Health Workgroup met and developed a Recommended Action work plan

- In 2012, the Early Childhood Advisory Council of West Virginia (ECAC) formed an Ad Hoc Committee of stakeholders to review core competencies and processes from other states to assist in establishing a plan for West Virginia

- In 2013, West Virginia purchased the Competency Guidelines and Endorsement System from Michigan with the intent of integrating this system into current delivery models
The Infant/Toddler Mental Health: Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention

Infant/Toddler Mental Health programs operate along a continuum of promotion, prevention and intervention and include:

- Parenting support programs such as Circle of Parents
- Consultation to child care providers and other professionals who interact with young children
- Home visiting models such as Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, Maternal Infant Health Outreach Workers (MIHOW), Right From the Start
- Early Intervention Services through Part C, Child Parent Psychotherapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Perinatal Treatment Services, and other therapeutic interventions
- The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence through professional development
- Help Me Grow developmental screening and referral program
22 states have adopted a model developed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health.

Validates that a professional has attained specific education and training and has acquired the necessary competencies to provide a high quality level of services to young children and their families.
## 2015 National Endorsement ® Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV Clinical</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV Policy</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV Faculty/Research</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Endorsed</td>
<td>1561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number in Process</td>
<td>1052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is a multi-disciplinary field that includes:

- Parents
- Early Childhood Professionals, including Child Care Workers
- Home Visitors
- Physicians and Nurses
- Family Support Workers
- Early Intervention Specialists
- Social Workers
- Counselors, Clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists
The endorsement aligns the workforce because we know:

- There is a huge variation in training and education levels
- It is found in many different settings, public and private
- There is great diversity of socio economic levels and modalities for serving children & families
Infant/Toddler Mental Health in West Virginia

• Unifies the systems that work with children & families

• Encourages collaboration across projects and disciplines

• Builds upon West Virginia’s strong history of early childhood collaboration

• Continues to advance the importance of social emotional development for all children and families

• Builds capacity for more awareness and training across disciplines
Goals of WV Association

- **To promote and support nurturing relationships for all infants and toddlers** to provide the essential formative context in which every infant and toddler acquires the basic emotional, cognitive, and social capacities and attitudes that influence later development.

- **To provide an interdisciplinary infant and toddler mental health organization** that facilitates, supports, and encourages cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among those concerned with promoting the optimal development of infants and toddlers and their families.
Goals of WV Association

To promote the recognition and better understanding of mental health issues for infants and toddlers through the development and implementation of a voluntary endorsement program based on levels of education, training, work experience, and knowledge appropriate to the delivery of high quality, culturally competent, and relationship-focused services to infants and toddlers and their caregivers.
# A look at the Core Competencies

## Infant Family Associate (Level I) – Competency Guidelines

The Infant Family Associate (Level I) Competency Guidelines were adopted by the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association to clearly describe the areas of expertise, responsibilities, and behaviors that demonstrate competency at this level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Expertise</th>
<th>Knowledge Areas</th>
<th>Demonstrated By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Foundations</td>
<td>- pregnancy &amp; early parenthood</td>
<td>1.1.a. Informally (and in some cases, formally) observes and assesses the infant or very young child, parent, and their relationship to identify landmarks of typical child development: behavior and healthy, secure relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- infant/very young child development &amp; behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- infant/young child &amp; family-centered practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- relationship-focused practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- family relationships &amp; dynamics</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- attachment, separation, trauma, &amp; loss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- cultural competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, Regulation &amp; Agency Policy</td>
<td>- ethical practice</td>
<td>1.2.a. Exchanges complete and unbiased information in a supportive manner with families and other team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- government, law &amp; regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- agency policy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- confidentiality of each family’s information in all contexts, with exception only when making necessary reports to protect the safety of a family member (e.g., Children’s Protective Services, Duty to Warn)</td>
<td>1.2.b.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- maintains appropriate personal boundaries with infants/very young children and families served, as established by the employing agency</td>
<td>1.2.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- promptly and appropriately reports harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare to Children’s Protective Services after discussion with supervisor</td>
<td>1.2.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsement At a Glance</td>
<td>Infant Family Associate</td>
<td>Infant Family Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education &amp; Work Experience</strong></td>
<td>Any academic degree OR CDA OR Associate degree OR 2 years of experience in the infant, early childhood or family field</td>
<td>Bachelors or Master’s degree AND 3 years of experience in infant, early childhood or family field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialized Training in Topics of Infant Mental Health</strong></td>
<td>30 clock hours/annual renewal of 15 clock hours</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflective Supervision or Consultation</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>24 clock hours within 1-2 year time period while working with infants, early childhood and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Examples</strong></td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Prevention &amp; Intervention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Endorsement At a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Ratings</th>
<th>Infant Family Associate</th>
<th>Infant Family Specialist</th>
<th>Infant Mental Health Specialist</th>
<th>Infant Mental Health Mentor (Clinical, Policy or Research/Faculty)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Supervisor; Someone with Level I, II, or III Endorsement requirements; Colleague or recipient of services, teacher, CDA mentor</td>
<td>Current Supervisor; Teacher, trainer, consultant, or parent/service recipient; Reflective Supervisor, or recipient of services</td>
<td>Current Supervisor; Teacher, trainer, consultant or parent/recipient; Reflective Supervisor</td>
<td>Current Supervisor; Reflective Supervisor, consultant or colleague; Supervisee, student or colleague</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Exam</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in WV Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Portfolio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Apply?

• Good for You: Your competence in the field of infant-family work is recognized

• Good for Families: Improves our ability to support families

• Good for Babies: Improves services and supports to benefit children three years and younger

• Good for Communities: Supports infant-family professionals in all settings

• Good for Early Childhood Systems of Care: A competent workforce, improves quality, and leads to desired outcomes
Where to Begin

- Visit our website: www.nurturingwvbabies.org
- Assess your current competency in infant mental health with the “Getting Started” checklist
- Enroll in courses/workshops that have an infant mental health focus to strengthen your current capacities or develop new skills and knowledge
- Contact me to express your interest in the Endorsement process – Michelle Rollyson, michelle@nurturingwvbabies.org
Good Infant/Toddler Mental Health Matters for the...

**Brain**
A baby's brain develops rapidly during the first 3 years of life. Predictable, responsive, and nurturing relationships support healthy brain development, encourage curiosity, connection, exploration and complex thought for success in life and school.

**Body**
Toxic stress from chronically unresponsive or hostile early relationships can have physical impact on a baby's health -- increasing the likelihood of life-long health problems, risky health behaviors and early death. When parents understand how past or present experiences of trauma, neglect, or abuse influence their capacity to care for their baby, they are more responsive and ready to feed, hold, comfort and protect their infant -- reducing stress and creating protective factors for life-long health and well-being.

**Behavior**
When a baby has healthy relationships with parents who are sensitive and responsive, he is better able to have, express, and regulate a range of emotions that can lead to positive behaviors and meaningful interactions with other adults and peers.
Contact us

www.nurturingwv babies.org

michelle@nurturingwv babies.org